

(3) *Submitted by qualified exemption applicant.* If the first accepted license application for a project was filed by a qualified exemption applicant, the applicant may request that its license application be treated initially as an application for exemption from licensing by so notifying the Commission in writing and, unless only rights to use or occupy Federal lands would be necessary to develop and operate the project, by submitting documentary evidence showing that the applicant holds the real property interests required under § 4.31. Such notice and documentation must be submitted not later than the last date for filing protests or motions to intervene prescribed in the public notice issued for its license application under § 4.32(d)(2).

(e) *Priority of exemption applicant's earlier permit or license application.* Any accepted preliminary permit or license application submitted by a person who later applies for exemption of the project from licensing will retain its validity and priority under this subpart until the preliminary permit or license application is withdrawn or the project is exempted from licensing.

[Order 413, 50 FR 11680, Mar. 25, 1985, as amended by Order 499, 53 FR 27002, July 18, 1988]

**§ 4.34 Hearings on applications; consultation on terms and conditions; motions to intervene; alternative procedures.**

(a) *Trial-type hearing.* The Commission may order a trial-type hearing on an application for a preliminary permit, a license, or an exemption from licensing upon either its own motion or the motion of any interested party of record. Any trial-type hearing will be limited to the issues prescribed by order of the Commission. In all other cases the hearings will be conducted by notice and comment procedures.

(b) *Notice and comment hearings.* All comments (including mandatory and recommended terms and conditions or prescriptions) on an application for exemption or license must be filed with the Commission no later than 60 days after issuance by the Commission of public notice declaring that the application is ready for environmental analysis. All reply comments must be filed

within 105 days of that notice. All comments and reply comments and all other filings described in this section must be served on all persons listed in the service list prepared by the Commission, in accordance with the requirements of § 385.2010 of this chapter. If a party or interceder (as defined in § 385.2201 of this Chapter) submits any written material to the Commission relating to the merits of an issue that may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, the party or interceder must also serve a copy of the submission on this resource agency. The Commission may allow for longer comment or reply comment periods if appropriate. A commenter or reply commenter may obtain an extension of time from the Commission only upon a showing of good cause or extraordinary circumstances in accordance with § 385.2008 of this chapter. Late-filed fish and wildlife recommendations will not be subject to the requirements of paragraphs (e), (f)(1)(ii), and (f)(3) of this section, and late-filed terms and conditions or prescriptions will not be subject to the requirements of paragraphs (f)(1)(iv), (f)(1)(v), and (f)(2) of this section. Late-filed fish and wildlife recommendations, terms and conditions, or prescriptions will be considered by the Commission under section 10(a) of the Federal Power Act if such consideration would not delay or disrupt the proceeding.

(1) *Agencies responsible for mandatory terms and conditions and presentations.* Any agency responsible for mandatory terms and conditions or prescriptions for licenses or exemptions, pursuant to sections 4(e), 18, and 30(c) of the Federal Power Act and section 405(d) of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978, as amended, must provide these terms and conditions or prescriptions in its initial comments filed with the Commission pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section. In those comments, the agency must specifically identify and explain the mandatory terms and conditions or prescriptions and their evidentiary and legal basis. If ongoing agency proceedings to determine the terms and conditions or prescriptions

are not completed by the date specified, the agency must submit to the Commission by the due date:

(i) Preliminary terms and conditions or prescriptions and a schedule showing the status of the agency proceedings and when the terms and conditions or prescriptions are expected to become final; or

(ii) A statement waiving the agency's right to file the terms and conditions or prescriptions or indicating the agency does not intend to file terms and conditions or prescriptions.

(2) *Fish and Wildlife agencies and Indian tribes.* All fish and wildlife agencies must set forth any recommended terms and conditions for the protection, mitigation of damages to, or enhancement of fish and wildlife, pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and section 10(j) of the Federal Power Act, in their initial comments filed with the Commission by the date specified in paragraph (b) of this section. All Indian tribes must submit recommendations (including fish and wildlife recommendations) by the same date. In those comments, a fish and wildlife agency or Indian tribe must discuss its understanding of the resource issues presented by the proposed facilities and the evidentiary basis for the recommended terms and conditions.

(3) *Other Government agencies and members of the public.* Resource agencies, other governmental units, and members of the public must file their recommendations in their initial comments by the date specified in paragraph (b) of this section. The comments must clearly identify all recommendations and present their evidentiary basis.

(4) *Submittal of modified recommendations, terms and conditions or prescriptions.* (i) If the information and analysis (including reasonable alternatives) presented in a draft environmental impact statement, issued for comment by the Commission, indicate a need to modify the recommendations or terms and conditions or prescriptions previously submitted to the Commission pursuant to paragraphs (b)(1), (b)(2), or (b)(3) of this section, the agency, Indian tribe, or member of the public must file with the Commission any

modified recommendations or terms and conditions or prescriptions on the proposed project (and reasonable alternatives) no later than the due date for comments on the draft environmental impact statement. Modified recommendations or terms and conditions or prescriptions must be clearly distinguished from comments on the draft statement.

(ii) If an applicant files an amendment to its application that would materially change the project's proposed plans of development, as provided in § 4.35, an agency, Indian tribe or member of the public may modify the recommendations or terms and conditions or prescriptions it previously submitted to the Commission pursuant to paragraphs (b)(1), (b)(2), or (b)(3) of this section no later than the due date specified by the Commission for comments on the amendment.

(c) *Additional procedures.* If necessary or appropriate the Commission may require additional procedures (e.g., a pre-hearing conference, further notice and comment on specific issues or oral argument). A party may request additional procedures in a motion that clearly and specifically sets forth the procedures requested and the basis for the request. Replies to such requests may be filed within 15 days of the request.

(d) *Consultation procedures.* Pursuant to the Federal Power Act and the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978, as amended, the Commission will coordinate as appropriate with other government agencies responsible for mandatory terms and conditions for exemptions and licenses for hydro-power projects. Pursuant to the Federal Power Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Commission will consult with fish and wildlife agencies concerning the impact of a hydro-power proposal on fish and wildlife and appropriate terms and conditions for license to adequately and equitably protect, mitigate damages to, and enhance fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat). Pursuant to the Federal Power Act and the Endangered Species Act, the Commission will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National

Marine Fisheries Service, as appropriate, concerning the impact of a hydropower proposal on endangered or threatened species and their critical habitat.

(e) *Consultation on recommended fish and wildlife conditions; section 10(j) process.* (1) In connection with its environmental review of an application for license, the Commission will analyze all terms and conditions timely recommended by fish and wildlife agencies pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act for the protection, mitigation of damages to, and enhancement of fish and wildlife affected by the development, operation, and management of the proposed project. Submission of such recommendations marks the beginning of the process under section 10(j) of the Federal Power Act.

(2) Within 45 days of the filing of any fish and wildlife recommendation, the Commission may seek clarification of it, unless this deadline is extended by the Commission upon notice to the fish and wildlife agency concerned. If the Commission's request for clarification is communicated in writing, copies of the request will be sent by the Commission to all parties, affected resource agencies, and Indian tribes, which may file a response to the request for clarification within the time period specified by the Commission.

(3) The Commission will make a preliminary determination of inconsistency of the fish and wildlife recommendation with the purposes and requirements of the Federal Power Act or other applicable law. This preliminary determination will be done in writing and shall include an explanation of its basis, including appropriate references to the environmental analysis conducted on the license application. A copy of the environmental analysis will be provided with the determination, and will be sent to all parties, affected resource agencies, and Indian tribes.

(4) Any party, affected resource agency, or Indian tribe may file comments in response to the preliminary determination of inconsistency within 45 days of its issuance. In this filing, the fish and wildlife agency concerned may also request a meeting, telephone or video conference or other additional

procedure to attempt to resolve any preliminary determination of inconsistency.

(5) If the Commission decides to conduct any meeting, telephone or video conference, or other procedure to address issues raised by its preliminary determination of inconsistency and comments thereon, the Commission will give at least 15 days' advance notice to each party, affected resource agency, or Indian tribe, which may participate in the meeting or conference. Any meeting, conference, or additional procedure to address these issues will be scheduled to take place within 75 days of the date the Commission issues a preliminary determination of inconsistency. The Commission will prepare a written summary of any meeting held under this subsection to discuss 10(j) issues, and a copy of the summary will be sent to all parties, affected resource agencies, and Indian tribes. If the Commission believes that any fish and wildlife recommendation submitted by a fish and wildlife agency may be inconsistent with the purposes and requirements of the Federal Power Act or other applicable law, the Commission will attempt to resolve any such inconsistency by appropriate means, giving due weight to the recommendations, expertise, and statutory responsibilities of the fish and wildlife agency.

(6) The section 10(j) process ends when the Commission issues an order granting or denying the license application in question.

(f) *Licenses and exemption conditions and required findings—*(1) *License conditions.* (i) All licenses shall be issued on the conditions specified in section 10 of the Federal Power Act and such other conditions as the Commission determines are lawful and in the public interest.

(ii) Subject to paragraph (f)(3) of this section, fish and wildlife conditions shall be based on recommendations timely received from the fish and wildlife agencies pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

(iii) The Commission will consider the timely recommendations of resource agencies, other governmental units, and members of the public, and

the timely recommendations (including fish and wildlife recommendations) of Indian tribes affected by the project.

(iv) Licenses for a project located within any Federal reservation shall be issued only after the findings required by, and subject to any conditions that may be timely received pursuant to, section 4(e) of the Federal Power Act.

(v) The Commission will require the construction, maintenance, and operation by a licensee at its own expense of such fishways as may be timely prescribed by the Secretary of Commerce or the Secretary of the Interior, as appropriate, pursuant to section 18 of the Federal Power Act.

(2) *Exemption conditions.* Any exemption from licensing issued for conduit facilities, as provided in section 30 of the Federal Power Act, or for small hydroelectric power projects having a proposed installed capacity of 5,000 kilowatts or less, as provided in section 405(d) of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978, as amended, shall include such terms and conditions as the fish and wildlife agencies may timely determine are appropriate to carry out the responsibilities specified in section 30(c) of the Federal Power Act.

(3) *Required findings.* If, after attempting to resolve inconsistencies between the fish and wildlife recommendations of a fish and wildlife agency and the purposes and requirements of the Federal Power Act or other applicable law, the Commission does not adopt in whole or in part a fish and wildlife recommendation of a fish and wildlife agency, the Commission will publish the findings and statements required by section 10(j)(2) of the Federal Power Act.

(g) *Application.* The provisions of paragraphs (b) through (d) and (f) of this section apply only to applications for license or exemption; paragraph (e) applies only to applications for license.

(h) Unless otherwise provided by statute, regulation or order, all filings in hydropower hearings, except those conducted by trial-type procedures, shall consist of an original and eight copies.

(i) *Alternative procedures.* (1) An applicant may submit to the Commission a request to approve the use of alter-

native procedures for pre-filing consultation and the filing and processing of an application for an original, new or subsequent hydropower license or exemption that is subject to § 4.38 or § 16.8 of this chapter, or for the amendment of a license that is subject to the provisions of § 4.38.

(2) The goal of such alternative procedures shall be to:

(i) Combine into a single process the pre-filing consultation process, the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act and administrative processes associated with the Clean Water Act and other statutes;

(ii) Facilitate greater participation by and improve communication among the potential applicant, resource agencies, Indian tribes, the public and Commission staff in a flexible pre-filing consultation process tailored to the circumstances of each case;

(iii) Allow for the preparation of a preliminary draft environmental assessment by an applicant or its contractor or consultant, or of a preliminary draft environmental impact statement by a contractor or consultant chosen by the Commission and funded by the applicant;

(iv) Promote cooperative efforts by the potential applicant and interested entities and encourage them to share information about resource impacts and mitigation and enhancement proposals and to narrow any areas of disagreement and reach agreement or settlement of the issues raised by the hydropower proposal; and

(v) Facilitate an orderly and expeditious review of an agreement or offer of settlement of an application for a hydropower license, exemption or amendment to a license.

(3) A potential hydropower applicant requesting the use of alternative procedures must:

(i) Demonstrate that a reasonable effort has been made to contact all resource agencies, Indian tribes, citizens' groups, and others affected by the applicant's proposal, and that a consensus exists that the use of alternative procedures is appropriate under the circumstances;

(ii) Submit a communications protocol, supported by interested entities,

governing how the applicant and other participants in the pre-filing consultation process, including the Commission staff, may communicate with each other regarding the merits of the applicant's proposal and proposals and recommendations of interested entities; and

(iii) Serve a copy of the request on all affected resource agencies and Indian tribes and on all entities contacted by the applicant that have expressed an interest in the alternative pre-filing consultation process.

(4) As appropriate under the circumstances of the case, the alternative procedures should include provisions for:

(i) Distribution of an initial information package and conduct of an initial information meeting open to the public;

(ii) The cooperative scoping of environmental issues (including necessary scientific studies), the analysis of completed studies and any further scoping; and

(iii) The preparation of a preliminary draft environmental assessment or preliminary draft environmental impact statement and related application.

(5) The Commission will give public notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER inviting comment on the applicant's request to use alternative procedures. The Commission will consider any such comments in determining whether to grant or deny the applicant's request to use alternative procedures. Such a decision will not be subject to interlocutory rehearing or appeal.

(6) If the Commission accepts the use of alternative procedures, the following provisions will apply.

(i) To the extent feasible under the circumstances of the proceeding, the Commission will give notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER and the applicant will give notice, in a local newspaper of general circulation in the county or counties in which the project is located, of the initial information meeting and the scoping of environmental issues. The applicant will also send notice of these stages to a mailing list approved by the Commission.

(ii) Every six months, the applicant shall file with the Commission a report summarizing the progress made in the

pre-filing consultation process and referencing the applicant's public file, where additional information on that process can be obtained. Summaries or minutes of meetings held in the process may be used to satisfy this filing requirement. The applicant must also file with the Commission a copy of its initial information package, each scoping document, and the preliminary draft environmental review document. All filings with the Commission under this section must include the number of copies required by paragraph (h) of this section, and the applicant shall send a copy of these filings to each participant that requests a copy.

(iii) At a suitable location, the applicant will maintain a public file of all relevant documents, including scientific studies, correspondence, and minutes or summaries of meetings, compiled during the pre-filing consultation process. The Commission will maintain a public file of the applicant's initial information package, scoping documents, periodic reports on the pre-filing consultation process, and the preliminary draft environmental review document.

(iv) An applicant authorized to use alternative procedures may substitute a preliminary draft environmental review document and additional material specified by the Commission instead of Exhibit E to its application and need not supply additional documentation of the pre-filing consultation process. The applicant will file with the Commission the results of any studies conducted or other documentation as directed by the Commission, either on its own motion or in response to a motion by a party to the licensing or exemption proceeding.

(v) Pursuant to the procedures approved, the participants will set reasonable deadlines requiring all resource agencies, Indian tribes, citizens' groups, and interested persons to submit to the applicant requests for scientific studies during the pre-filing consultation process, and additional requests for studies may be made to the Commission after the filing of the application only for good cause shown.

(vi) During the pre-filing process the Commission may require the filing of

preliminary fish and wildlife recommendations, prescriptions, mandatory conditions, and comments, to be submitted in final form after the filing of the application; no notice that the application is ready for environmental analysis need be given by the Commission after the filing of an application pursuant to these procedures.

(vii) Any potential applicant, resource agency, Indian tribe, citizens' group, or other entity participating in the alternative pre-filing consultation process may file a request with the Commission to resolve a dispute concerning the alternative process (including a dispute over required studies), but only after reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the dispute with other participants in the process. No such request shall be accepted for filing unless the entity submitting it certifies that it has been served on all other participants. The request must document what efforts have been made to resolve the dispute.

(7) If the potential applicant or any resource agency, Indian tribe, citizens' group, or other entity participating in the alternative pre-filing consultation process can show that it has cooperated in the process but a consensus supporting the use of the process no longer exists and that continued use of the alternative process will not be productive, the participant may petition the Commission for an order directing the use by the potential applicant of appropriate procedures to complete its application. No such request shall be accepted for filing unless the entity submitting it certifies that it has been served on all other participants. The request must recommend specific procedures that are appropriate under the circumstances.

(8) The Commission may participate in the pre-filing consultation process and assist in the integration of this process and the environmental review process in any case, including appropriate cases where the applicant, contractor, or consultant funded by the applicant is not preparing a preliminary draft environmental assessment or preliminary draft environmental impact statement, but where staff assistance is available and could expedite the proceeding.

(9) In all cases where the Commission has approved the use of alternative pre-filing consultation procedures prior to December 5, 1997, during the pre-filing process the potential applicant need not follow any additional requirements imposed by paragraph (i) of this section, if in so doing the applicant would repeat any steps already taken in the preparation of its application and supporting documentation or act inconsistently with any written agreement signed before December 5, 1997 by the applicant and the other participants in the alternative process.

[Order 533, 56 FR 23148, May 20, 1991, as amended at 56 FR 61155, Dec. 2, 1991; Order 540, 57 FR 21737, May 22, 1992; Order 596, 62 FR 59810, Nov. 5, 1997]

#### **§ 4.35 Amendment of application; date of acceptance.**

(a) *General rule.* Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, if an applicant amends its filed application as described in paragraph (b) of this section, the date of acceptance of the application under § 4.32(f) is the date on which the amendment to the application was filed.

(b) Paragraph (a) of this section applies if an applicant:

(1) Amends its filed license or preliminary permit application in order to change the status or identity of the applicant or to materially amend the proposed plans of development; or

(2) Amends its filed application for exemption from licensing in order to materially amend the proposed plans of development, or

(3) Amends its filed application in order to change its statement of intent of whether or not it will seek benefits under section 210 of PURPA, as originally filed under § 4.32(c)(1).

(c) An application amended under paragraph (a) is a new filing for:

(1) The purpose of determining its timeliness under § 4.36 of this part;

(2) Disposing of competing applications under § 4.37; and

(3) Reissuing public notice of the application under § 4.32(d)(2).

(d) If an application is amended under paragraph (a) of this section, the Commission will rescind any acceptance letter already issued for the application.